



MEETING MINUTES / 21 JANUARY 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Stewart, Baldwin, Bradley, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala
83.3%

Excused: Showell, Newman

Unexcused:

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Ginny Yelland (Wilmington VAMC), Matthew Brown (Wilmington VAMC), Archie Poling (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors), Kim McMullen, MaryAnne Donaghy (Biden Institute)

VICE CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Moment of silence for:

Service Members abroad

Martin Luther King Jr

Wished Chairwoman Showell good health as she's "under the weather"

MEETING MINUTES:

October minutes were motioned by McMullen approved by Magner

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Virginia Yelland, Assistant to the Director

Introduced Matthew Brown, Chief of Health Administrative Services

- Oversees scheduling, eligibility, enrollment, medical records, release of information
- Supervises 140 employees

Confirmed construction for Wilmington VA parking garage

- Starting in the spring
- Will impact parking so employees will park offsite to provide customer parking
- Valet service will move to the front of the medical facility
- Prefabricated garage will be placed in a sectional format

(Lopez) Asked about handicapped parking spaces

They will still be available during construction and in the completed lot

Kent County CBOC

- Actively in construction phase will be 29K square feet
- Will have service officer and conferencing space

(Baldwin) Wanted to confirm that during parking lot construction, the VSO meeting will be available online

This was confirmed and coordination is pending

(Baldwin) Can any veteran enroll in the VA healthcare system?

To be eligible for services you must have 24 months active duty service

(Baldwin) Wondered why VA cards could not be issued when service members transition from service Roundtable discussion explained the issue is between DoD and the VA

Discussion mentioned which VA card holders have access to military installations

(Farley) Asked if VA cards can be issued at the CBOCs

Yes, but sometimes the camera equipment is the issue

(Lopez) Asked about the Veterans Experience Council

Created new Veterans Experience office, in Wilmington, to improve customer service

- Looking at services that veterans need quick access to and will move those closer to the main entrance

- Looking to set up a local council with staff, service officers, veterans

- - Would like someone from the commission to be a part

(Magner) Wanted to know if the handicap spaces for hand-controlled vehicles would still be in place

They should stay in place and will check with those controlling parking to ensure

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Archie Poling, Interim Director:

73 residents

Will begin construction on two new bathing suites

Several team members visited the Long Island Veterans Home to observe their day-care center program

- Will look to start the process locally but will have to investigate

Moving forward with dental suite and looking at different plans

Exploring new call bell system and communication improvements

Looking at ceiling bariatric lifts, currently have two, would like one per unit

- Bids are out for this addition

Secretary Bullock recently visited the facility and engaged with the staff

The admissions and Friend of Delaware Veterans Home meetings are this week

(Baldwin) When do you plan on having more than 73 residents?

Beginning today the plans are to greatly expand the census

(Baldwin) Can we place 150 veterans?

No, the actual maximum capacity is 145

(Farley) Do you have the staff to care for 145 veterans?

No, we staff as needed

Facility needs overhead lifts in all units, just in case of a medical emergency, the original structure was not designed for this

(Stewart) Emphasized whatever the home needs, it receives support from the Department of State

(Sarg) Are there a certain number of beds that can be counted as bariatric, meaning is there a limit?

No sure, this is something that needs to be explored as the home was originally built to hold two bariatric beds

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Not present

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Courtney Stewart, Deputy Secretary of State

Mentioned her attendance was to show support for the agency

Liz Byers-Jiron, Veterans Stand Down

Discussed last September's event and of the upcoming stand down (kick-off 23 January)

(Lopez) Mentioned how the VA benefits team registered veterans for services

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition

Visited an incarcerated veteran and mentioned this population's need for assistance following reintegration

Mentioned upcoming fundraiser for trust fund

MaryAnne Donaghy, Biden Institute (University of Delaware)
Focused on veterans' employment and education as a policy institute
Hosted a focus group of 9/11 veterans seeking input on where the institute can bring the most impact
Met with Michael Haynie, Syracuse University Veterans Institute
- Highly productive veterans and family's program
- Seeking ideas
Attended Student Veterans of America conference

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:

Interments – 78 (+18)
Mentioned how some flagpoles are vacant, in need of veteran service organization flags

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments – 29 (+17)
Expansion project is going on, will produce 1600 columbarium niches
High visibility internment was broadcast on the local news
- Commission wasn't informed and the director will ensure the cemetery administrator keeps leadership aware

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:

Positive meeting with the veterans' home dental suite selection team
Brain Injury Council, through House Bill 14, is seeking motorcycle helmet protection for all riders
- Delaware only requires helmet wear during the safety test but not after
Delaware needs an advanced brain injury treatment facility
Delaware does have intermediate brain injury treatment facilities

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:

Legislative recommendations, thanks to Commissioner Sarg, are ready for presentation
- Awaiting a date to present to the joint veterans affairs committee
House Bill 265, Property Tax Exemption for 100% Service Connected, was voted out of veterans committee
- Urged commissioners to speak to their legislators about support
(Sarg) Recommendations will be signed by myself and Commissioner Showell
- We need to get sponsors for these recommendations
- Signatures quantify the product

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 15; Granted 11 (71.9%); Awarded \$10,787.35; Balance - \$47,263.00
Legislative Hall Display Table will be on 29 January / 1400
- Meet and greet with legislators and discuss the agency
Important for veteran service organizations seek support for veterans' legislation

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Commissioner McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association - AFSA)
Chapter voted on and will install new officers
22 – 24 Apr: Division 1 Professional Airman Conference, Dayton, OH
7 December: Attended DAV Christmas Party
17 December: Attended DCVA Holiday Party

Vacant (American Legion - AL)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AmVets)

9 December: Attended Wreaths Across America ceremony

14 December: Along with other Post 2 members, laid wreaths on graves at Millsboro Cemetery

Post 2 members donated \$750.00 to Wreaths Across America

Post 2 is giving life memberships to members over age 90

AmVets National is sponsoring Rolling to Remember on Memorial Day weekend

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

17 - 20 December: Attended Departmental Service Officer training

19 December: Attended VVA Christmas party for veteran receiving service dog

10 January: Presented Department Service Officer training for two female veterans

14 January: Attended Veteran Service Officer meeting at Wilmington VA

Department helped 68 veterans with claims

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)

Completed Toys for Tots drive, numbers are not yet available

Working Mayor's Veterans Crisis group

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)

Met with local legislators concerning veterans' recommendations

6 January: Attended Brain Injury Council Meeting (Motorcycle Safety Helmet Bill HB14)

14 January: Attended Employment First Oversight Commission Meeting

16 January: Attended DVH Dental Suite Design Meeting with architects from Becker Morgan

20 January: Met with Representative Sean Lynn on HB14

11 February: MOAA fundraiser at Outback Steakhouse, supports scholarship fund

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)

8 January: Two Purple Heart flags have been ordered from MOPH National Headquarters for use by the Northern Veterans Cemetery

8 February / 0900: Executive Committee meeting is scheduled at the DCVA conference room

10 February: JROTC/ROTC medals and certificates will be ordered for the University of Delaware Army and Air Force units and 14 Delaware high schools

Commissioner Newman (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)

- Met Senator Poore, with General Vavala, on military items

- General Berry briefing from Delaware Decision Makers

- USS Delaware fund raising efforts

- Funding requests procedure for Commission? (Confusion on asks)

- DMA, FSMA, CSW seven U.S. Military Academy appointments (arriving with four years' experience)

- Mindfulness training for veterans (Sam Beard, Jefferson Council)
- Met with President Clarke, Wesley College, for ideas on veteran enrollment
- Sussex Military Academy is pending as a new plan will be unveiled

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)
Nothing to present

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)
17 December: Attended Sussex Military Academy board meeting
20 December: DelVets Post 2 sponsored three single parent veteran families for Christmas
22 December: Attended DelVets Post 2 benevolent event
7 January: Attended Sussex Military Academy board meeting
8 January: Attended Dover Mayor's Crisis Awareness Challenge meeting
9 January: Attended Drone Workforce Solutions briefing
14 January: Attended Veteran Service Officer meeting at Wilmington VA

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans' associations)
Nothing to report

TERM COMPLETION:

Bradley – 21 April 2020
Newman – 21 April 2020

EVENTS:

29 January / 1200 - 1430: Table Display, Legislative Hall
12 February / 1730: Military Affaire, The Landings, Dover AFB

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Submission of Legislative Concerns (CLOSED)

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

CLOSED SESSION:

None

SPECIAL SESSION:

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 18 January 2020 at 1000

LOCATION:

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs